THE FIRST UNIVERSITIES

History & Humanities

Teacher Notes

~ StandFor Projects

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#EXPLORING THE TOPIC

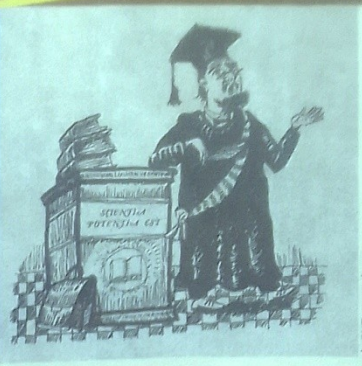
1 Discuss the following questions in groups.

a) Have you ever visited a university?

b) What do you know about how a university works?

c) Are there universities in your city? Which one is the oldest? What about in your state?

d) In your opinion, what are some of the differences and similarities between ancient and contemporary universities?



alex74/Shutterstock.com

2 Read the title of the infographic and each subheading, and then look at the central illustration. What kind of information do you think is in the text?

Students are expected to skim through the text and learn that the infographic is about the emergence of the first universities in Europe, and that it gives information about when, where and how they started, and who had access to them.

Personal answer.

The oldest existing and continuously operating educational institution in the world is the University of Karueein, founded in 859 A.D. in Fez, Morocco. The University of Bologna, Italy, was founded in 1088 and is the oldest in Europe.

From <www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/oldest-university>. Accessed May 19, 2017.

3 Match each of the following words with its corresponding definition.

a) catechism

b) chair

c) monk

d) cloister

e) masterpiece

f) corpse

g) royal

h) clergyman

(b) The position of being a university professor.

(f) The dead body of a person.

(c) A member of an all-male religious group that lives in a monastery, apart from other people.

(g) Related to or belonging to a king or queen.

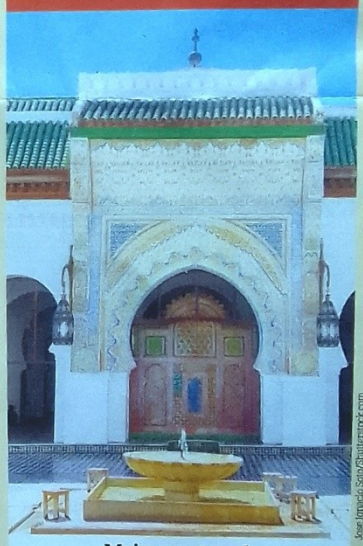
(a) A set of questions and answers about the Christian religion that people learn in order to become full members of a church.

(h) A male member of the clergy.

(e) A work of art, a piece of writing or music, etc. that is of very high quality or that is the best that a particular artist, writer, etc. has produced; a very good example of something.

(d) Life in a convent or monastery.

From <www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary>; <www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english>. Accessed May 17, 2017.



Jose Ignacio Soto/Shutterstock.com

Main courtyard, University of Karueein.

Rosa Helen/Shutterstock.com

Inner courtyard, University of Bologna.

K-W-L chart

Set a time limit for students to complete the **K-W-L chart**, listing what they already know about the first universities (K), what they want to know (W) and what they learned (L).

I *know* about this topic	I *want* to know	I *learned*

The first universities

Between the 11th and 13th centuries, Europe went through a new expansion and prosperity cycle. Feudalism was consolidated as a hegemonic political and economic form, foreign invasions ceased, land productivity increased through the use of new techniques, populations stabilized and trade was expanded. As a result, a new social class emerged: the bourgeoisie, which was dedicated to commerce. The rebirth of cities also took place, and once again they became centers of education. Craft guilds, parish and grammar schools, masters-schools (or masters of first letters) and universities were an inseparable part of the new urban landscape.

Learning in the boroughs

While the old educational methods were still employed in rural areas, new educational practices were established in the cities. Parish schools taught catechism and basic reading, writing and arithmetic. The subjects were reserved for the education of secular monks who worked in the cloisters of cathedrals, who in turn were able to teach more advanced subjects, such as geometry, rhetoric, and grammar. In Europe, the first universities date from the middle 12th century. Some emerged as a teachers' corporation, such as the University of Paris, while others became a students' corporation that looked for teachers, such as the University of Bologna.

Craft guilds

Urban workers had organizations, such as trade unions. New members started their training as learners, then became apt and, when they had finally produced their masterpiece, were allowed to practice their profession.

THE TEACHING OF MEDICINE

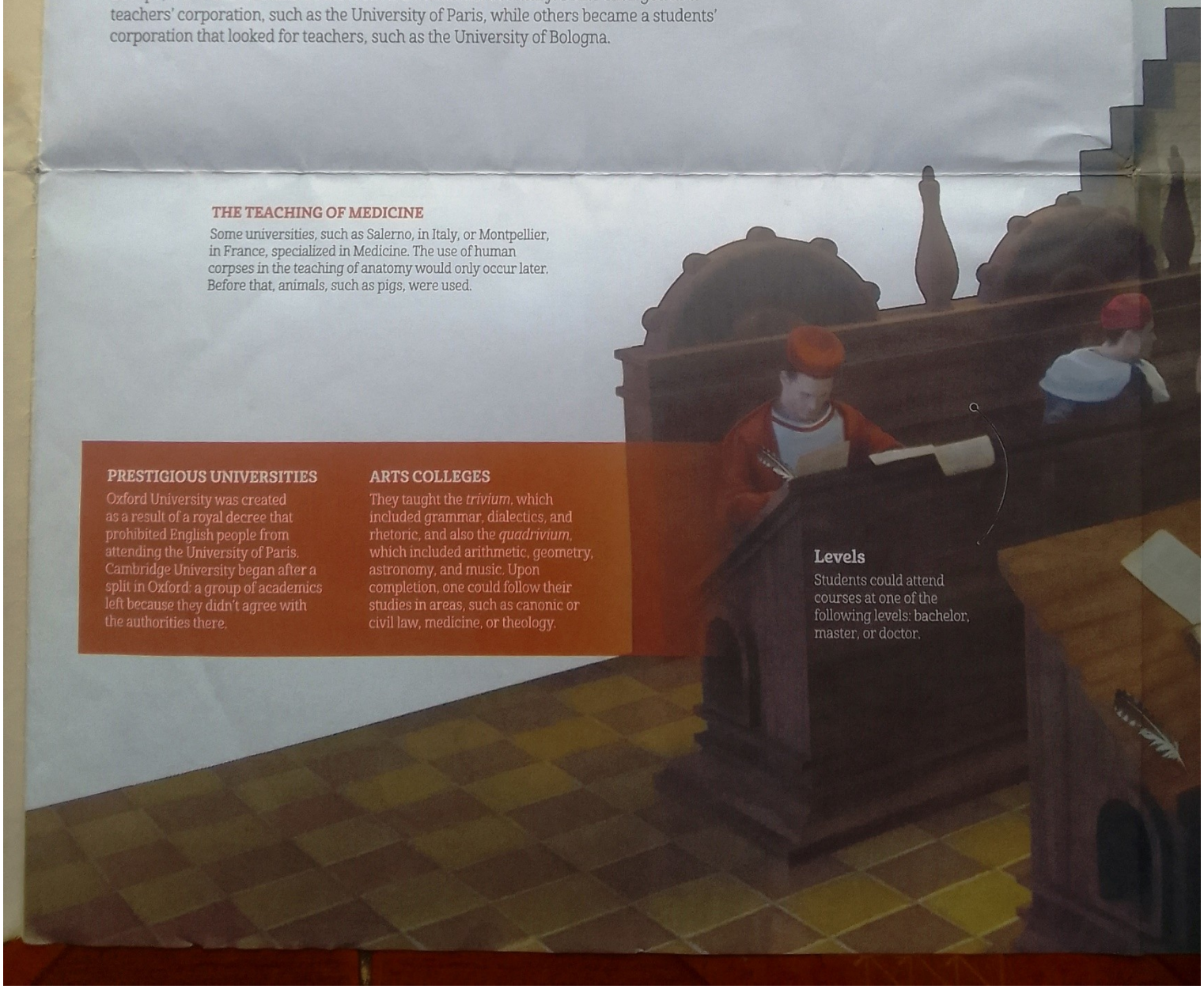
Some universities, such as Salerno, in Italy, or Montpellier, in France, specialized in Medicine. The use of human corpses in the teaching of anatomy would only occur later. Before that, animals, such as pigs, were used.

PRESTIGIOUS UNIVERSITIES

Oxford University was created as a result of a royal decree that prohibited English people from attending the University of Paris. Cambridge University began after a split in Oxford: a group of academics left because they didn't agree with the authorities there.

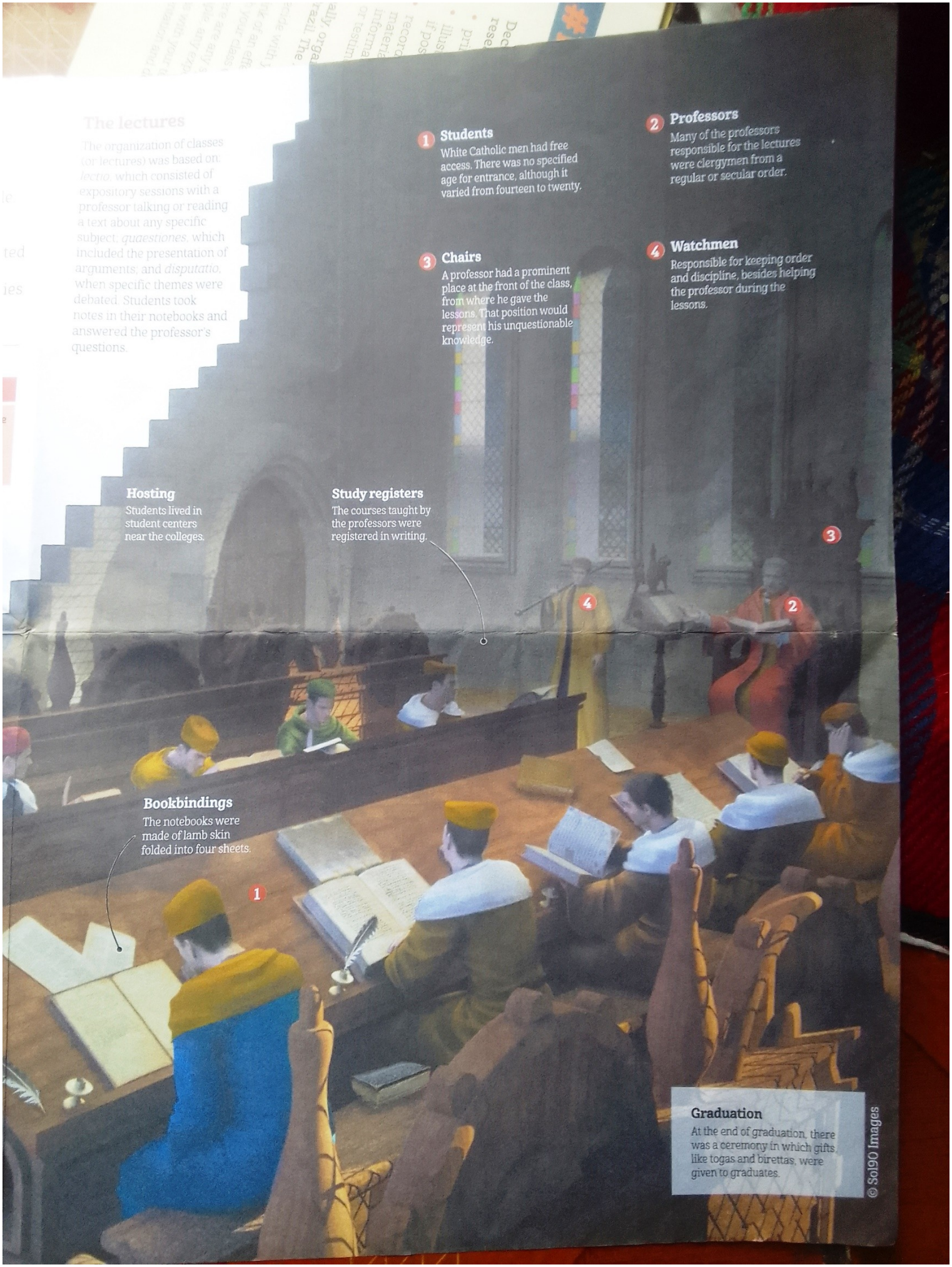
ARTS COLLEGES

They taught the *trivium*, which included grammar, dialectics, and rhetoric, and also the *quadrivium*, which included arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. Upon completion, one could follow their studies in areas, such as canonic or civil law, medicine, or theology.



Levels

Students could attend courses at one of the following levels: bachelor, master, or doctor.


1 Students
White Catholic men had free access. There was no specified age for entrance, although it varied from fourteen to twenty.
2 Professors
Many of the professors responsible for the lectures were clergymen from a regular or secular order.
3 Chairs
A professor had a prominent place at the front of the class, from where he gave the lessons. That position would represent his unquestionable knowledge.
4 Watchmen
Responsible for keeping order and discipline, besides helping the professor during the lessons.
Hosting
Students lived in student centers near the colleges.
Study registers
The courses taught by the professors were registered in writing.
Bookbindings
The notebooks were made of lamb skin folded into four sheets.
Graduation
At the end of graduation, there was a ceremony in which gifts, like togas and birettas, were given to graduates.
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#GUIDED READING

1 Medieval universities

To compensate for the short title, the introductory text anticipates some of the contents that are later taken in more detail. When reading this information, try to understand the historical context around the first universities in Europe and then analyze how they worked.

Answer this question:

- In your opinion, are there any great differences between medieval and modern teaching methods?

1. The information in the introductory text of the infographic contributes to the analysis of the role of higher education in the Middle Ages. In showing how it worked and explaining a little about the origins of the first universities, the infographic highlights certain elements that are still present in today's educational systems. This helps us think about teaching objectives and methods. Accept students answers as long as they are consistent with the question being asked.

2 Historical context

The subheadings divide the text into blocks, which facilitates the perception of the topics discussed in the infographic. In this case, the subheading calls attention to a brief description of the historical background at the time, revealing how the first universities in Europe appeared. Read the text again and answer:

- Does the information in this part challenge the traditional view that the Middle Ages were a period of darkness and obscurantism?

2. The infographic allows us to challenge the idea that the Middle Ages were a period of obscurantism. The period was marked by political stability – with the institution of feudalism and the end of invasions – and by economic growth, due to the rise in both agricultural productivity and trade, the latter mainly among the new cities. The emergence of universities and other schools is related to these new urban environments and to the bourgeoisie that thrived in the cities. There was also a resumption of a deeper contact with classical Ancient authors, who founded the thought basis that culminated in the so-called Scientific Revolution, in the Modern Age.

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Levels

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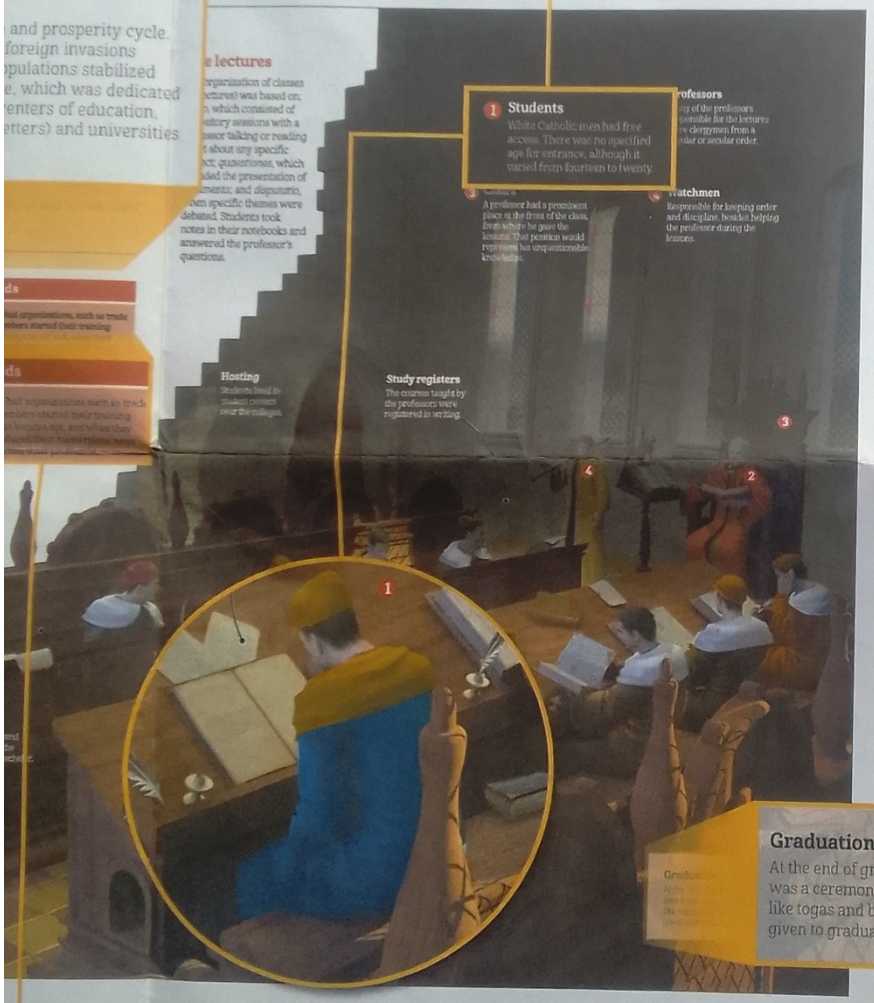
3 Traditional universities

In another box, which also makes use of color, the text briefly mentions when and how some of the most traditional universities in the world emerged, and in which systematized teaching arose.

3. Check that students understand that the first university in Europe was in Bologna, Italy. Higher education at Oxford began earlier than in Paris, although the French school became a university before its English counterpart.

6 In many infographics, a central image works as a starter for readers, even when it is surrounded by text. In this case, the illustration doesn't merely serve a decorative purpose, but an informative one as well: it tries to show the classroom environment in the first universities. Related captions and subheadings give details about the routine of a university.



6. Explain that most of the information in the infographic, especially that which allows for a critical view of teaching in different countries, is attached to the central illustration. It is important to read with students each of the subheadings and their corresponding content in order to expand the discussions and analyses generated by this information. Through careful observation of the illustration, it is possible to imagine what the classes were like and compare them with modern methods and environments in schools and universities today.

Suggested activity
After reading, reflecting and debating about the information in the infographic, suggest that the students write a text of up to twenty lines in which they defend or reject the idea that access to higher education is still a form of social distinction. Students are expected to justify their opinions not only based on their own experiences, but also based on their observation of current Brazilian society. Encourage them to go beyond, talking about the importance of higher education, and take into account the fact that certain courses and universities have greater or lesser status.

5 Symbol of prestige

Using another text box once, the infographic emphasizes that universities emerged as a symbol of status, prestige, and differentiated knowledge. When students of the time graduated, they received objects that symbolized that differential.

- Are those customs still kept until today?

5. Tell students that even today physicians and lawyers are called "doctors" for historical reasons and customs. Encourage them to research and discuss this controversial topic, which is related not only to the use of language, more importantly to sociological issues. Explain it is common for students who graduate to receive graduation rings as gifts, which symbolize a rite of passage (the graduation itself). Encourage them to research the colors of the rings for each course.

4 The segmentation of teaching

Information placed in areas of lesser emphasis in an infographic often ends up being overlooked by readers. To avoid this, visual resources are employed to highlight the importance of the information, such as colored text boxes. Here, this resource was used to show the craft guilds. Note how education started to become organized and systematized at different levels, the rational being that each level would go deeper than the previous one.

- In this sense, what are the similarities and differences in comparison with the present division of the educational system in *Ensino Fundamental*, *Médio*, and higher education?

4. Students are expected to know that education in Brazil includes early childhood education (*Educação Infantil*), *Ensino Fundamental* and *Ensino Médio*. After these three levels, there is higher education. These divisions were established by the Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (LDB 9394/96), which, among other items, settled the purpose of education in Brazil. Talk about other types of education, such as Education of Young Adults (EJA), professional or technical education, special education, and distance learning.

#POST READING

1 Which part of the infographic most attracted your attention? Why?

Personal answer.

2 Universities in Europe emerged during a new cycle of expansion and prosperity between the 11th and the 13th centuries. Reread the following sentence, and discuss in groups the questions that follow it.

While the old educational methods were still employed in rural areas, new educational practices were established in the cities.

a) Why do you think in the rural areas "old educational methods" were still popular?

b) Thinking about today, can you tell if there are differences between the educational systems of large urban areas and those of rural areas? If so, which?

3 Fill in the chart with information from the infographic that refers to each of the four elements of higher education in the first universities in Europe.

Roles of professors and students in lectures	Profile of students	Status of professors	Watchmen
Lectures consisted of expository sessions (teacher talking to the students or reading texts), presentation of arguments, or discussion of specific themes. Students took notes in notebooks and answered the professor's questions.	Young white Catholic men, aged fourteen to twenty.	Considered to have unquestionable knowledge.	Responsible for keeping order and discipline, and helping the professor during the lessons. Comment with the students that in Brazil the presence of an inspector (also called *bedel*) with very similar roles was very common until the mid-1980s.

4 In groups, discuss the similarities and differences between the same elements, if applicable, in schools and universities in Brazil today. Take notes in the chart below.

Roles of professors and students in lectures	Profile of students	Status of professors	Watchmen
Personal answer.	Personal answer.	Personal answer.	Personal answer.

5 Personal answers: Students are expected to mention what they know about what was asked, but they can also ask their own questions. If they show interest, encourage them to research additional information and continue the discussion in the following class.

5 In groups, discuss the following questions.

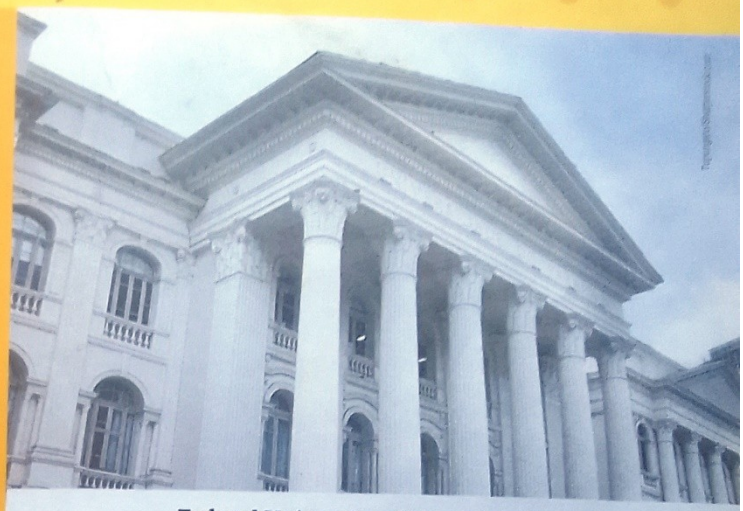
a) As you have learned, students in the first universities were young white Catholic men. What about in Brazil? What do you know about current policies for access to public universities?

b) What is the profile of students who benefit from the quotas policy in higher education?

#RESEARCH TIME

You have learned about the first universities in Europe. Your task now is to form groups and research higher education in Brazil, including the first universities and those of today. In addition to other topics your group may decide to include, finding the answer to the following questions may be a good start:

- When and where did the first universities in Brazil emerge?
- What was the profile of the students?
- What was the profile of the professors?
- What courses were there?
- How long did courses take to be completed?
- What were the roles of students and professors?
- In terms of the profiles of students and professors, courses offered (and modes, for example, presence versus distance learning), roles of students and professors, etc., what are the similarities and differences between Brazil's first universities and those of today?
- What did it mean to graduate from university at the beginning of the 20th century, and what does it mean today?



Federal University of Paraná, in Curitiba.

Remember to collect photos and audiovisual materials, such as videos and interviews, to help illustrate your work.

#IT'S YOUR TURN

It's time to share the results of your research with your classmates. Here are a few tips to help you organize and present the data you collected.

- First, decide with the other groups and your teacher on what would be the best way to present the data – oral presentations with the help of visual aids, such as posters or audiovisual projections; infographics; the production of a booklet with information from all the groups, etc.
- Regardless of how the research results are presented, the entire class must see every group's presentation, and be made aware of the group member's contribution.
- Once you decide on the form of presentation, show your teacher, before you prepare the final version, what you have produced.
- For the final version, make any necessary adjustments in terms of content and language following your teacher's suggestions.
- Finally, remember to take notes of any new information you learn from the work done by other groups.

Instead of suggesting a specific genre, the idea here is that you motivate students to present the results of their research in a way that you all find practical and that contributes to the learning of the group. Decide with students on the fairest way to evaluate the works produced.

Project schedule

Who
What
When